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1995

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1-31-1995

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Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "01/31/1995 - NCA Site Visit.pdf" (1995). 1995. 34.
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95-29

January 31, 1995

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

NCA SITE VISIT

CHARLESTON -- A nine-member reaccreditation team from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) will visit Eastern Illinois University next week to evaluate the institution to determine if it meets 24 criteria for reaccreditation.

The site visit culminates a two-year self-study process that involved the entire campus community in the collection of institutional data and resulted in the production of a 200-plus page self-study report that has been submitted to the NCA review team.

NCA is a not-for-profit, voluntary, membership organization of elementary, secondary and postsecondary institutions that is dedicated to improving education through evaluation and accreditation.

Eastern was last accredited by NCA in 1984 for a 10-year period.

Eastern President David Jorns said the team is composed of faculty, staff and administrators from several Midwestern colleges and universities. The team chair is Leslie Cochran, president of Youngstown State University in Ohio.

Other team members are Dale Dick, professor of psychology, University of

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Wisconsin at Eau Claire; Lillie Howard, associate vice president for academic affairs, Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio; Patricia Murphy, dean of assessment and institutional research at North Dakota State University in Fargo; Karen Ott, professor of biology, University of Evansville (IN); Elizabeth Stanley, director of institutional research, Iowa State University in Ames; Betty Youngblood, chancellor, University of Wisconsin in Superior; James Rhatigan, vice president for student affairs at Wichita State University; and Richard Olson, professor of business, Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas.

"The team members are from institutions similar to Eastern and each has his/her own specialty," Jorns said.

On the first day of their visit to campus on Monday, Feb. 6, the NCA reaccreditation team will meet with President Jorns, members of EIU's President's Council and self-study coordinators Kandy Baumgardner and Steve Whitley (consultant-evaluator for NCA); they will lunch with local business owners, educators, government officials and other community leaders.

"Eastern is a member of the Charleston community and in that respect needs to give as well as take. The meeting with local leaders will be an open discussion about the university and how it relates to the community," Whitley said.

On Tuesday, Feb. 7, team members will hold an open meeting for students in the 1895 Room in the University Union and for faculty and staff in the Coleman Hall lecture room. Both meetings will be held at 3 p.m. (not at 11 a.m. as pre-

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viously reported).

"We especially encourage students who have more than an emotional opinion about the university to participate in these open meetings and to share what kind of positive and/or negative experiences they have had at Eastern," Whitley said.

"For faculty and staff, it's an opportunity to provide members of the NCA team with information and views concerning the university's strengths and weaknesses as well as the campus processes by which goals are set and changes are made," he said.

On Wednesday, Feb. 8, team members will conduct an exit interview with President Jorns and discuss their evaluation of Eastern. They will submit a written report to the university within 30 days of their visit; Eastern will have an opportunity to respond to the report.

Whitley said NCA will not announce a formal decision about Eastern's reaccreditation until its fall board meeting in September or October.

During their visit, Whitley said the team does not limit its review to academic programs. "Team members look at all university areas to determine what the institution is doing well and what it needs to improve. Their primary role is that of 'consultant,'" Whitley said.

"It is an extremely valuable process for the university that is uniquely American," Whitley noted, adding that no other countries do similar evaluation.

"More importantly, it is dedicated to providing 'quality' in the educational process."